

Message Text

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SUBJ: THE NEW STATE COMMITTEE FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL
QUESTIONS FACES A THANKLESS TASK

REF: A) MOSCOW 13224, B) MOSCOW 13201, C) MOSCOW 11434

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN PRAVDA CONSIDERS
THE PERENNIAL SOVIET PROBLEM OF THE FLIGHT OF THE AGRI-
CULTURAL POPULATION FROM THE LAND AND HOW TO REVERSE THIS
TREND. IT SUGGESTS THAT THE NEWLY REORGANIZED STATE COMMITTEE
FOR LABOR AND SCOCIAL QUESTIONS IS JUST THE ORGANIZATION TO
GRAPPLE WITH THIS QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FLIGHT OF THE RURAL POPULATION FROM THE LAND AND THE
CONCERN SHOWN BY THE AUTHORITIES OVER THIS TREND HAS BEEN A
PROMINENT THEME IN RECENT SOVIET DISCUSSIONS OF AGRICULTURAL
QUESTIONS (SEE REFTELS). PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT V. SAPOV
FOCUSES ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS PROBLEM IN ALTAY KRAY
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IN A FRONT-PAGED ARTICLE ENTITLED "BREAD AND PEOPLE" IN

SEPT 12 PRAVDA. HE NOTES THAT:

--SETTLERS WHO ARRIVE IN ALTAY KRAY THROUGH GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS, WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, DO NOT REMAIN LONG;
--THE SEVERE LABOR SHORTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN ALTAY KRAY "IS THE RESULT OF POPULATION MIGRATION OVER A PERIOD OF MANY YEARS";
--THE URGE TO MOVE IS EVIDENT EVEN AMONG OLD-TIME RESIDENTS OF ALTAY KRAY;
--THE MOST ACUTE PROBLEM IS THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MOVING AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE, AT A RATE OF ABOUT 25,000 PER YEAR, AND THEY INCLUDE MANY TRAINED IN THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY;
--DURING THE PAST FIVE YEAR PLAN, THE KRAY TRAINED OVER 70,000 TRACTOR AND COMBINE OPERATORS, BUT DURING THE SAME PERIOD THE AVAILABLE LABOR FORCE DROPPED FROM 85 PERCENT DOWN TO 73 PERCENT OF REQUIREMENTS. PUT ANOTHER WAY, THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED OPERATORS AVAILABLE PER 100 AGRICULTURAL MACHINES DROPPED FROM 116 TO 95. THE LACK OF TRAINED AGRICULTURAL PERSONNEL IS ALSO ACUTELY FELT IN OTHER BRANCHES OF AGRICULTURE, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY.

3. THE AUTHOR CONCLUDES THAT EFFORTS TO PERSUADE SETTLERS TO MOVE TO ALTAY KRAY ARE IN THEMSELVES NOT ENOUGH. MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO PERSUADE THE PEOPLE TO STAY ON THE FARM. HE DESCRIBES VARIOUS MEASURES TAKEN BY ONE KOLKHOZ TO "FIX" THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN PLACE, INCLUDING BONUSES, ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING HOUSEHOLD GOODS, HOUSING, AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ATTENTION TO THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS. HE COMPLAINS THAT IN MANY CASES SUCH MEASURES ARE EITHER INADEQUATE, HALF-HEARTED, OR TOTALLY ABSENT, AND THAT IN MANY AREAS WORKING CONDITIONS ARE HARD AND AMENITIES FEW. IN SPITE OF EFFORTS TAKEN TO DATE, THE GENERAL POPULATION DRAIN TREND CONTINUES UNABATED.

4. IN CONCLUSION, THE AUTHOR SUGGESTS THAT "WITH THE FORMATION OF THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR THERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL BE A CHANGE IN THE FUNCTIONS OF ITS REGIONAL SUB-DIVISIONS. SPECIALISTS ARE EXPRESSING HOPE THAT THESE (SUBDIVISIONS) WILL BE STRENGTHENED MATERIALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY. THEY NOTE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO ESTABLISH EVEN RAYON OFFICES OF THIS SERVICE. . ."

5. COMMENT. THE PRESENT ARTICLE PROVIDES THE FIRST SPECIFIC MEDIA EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS FOR THE

RECENT REORGANIZATION OF THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR LABOR AND WAGES INTO A UNION REPUBLIC STATE COMMITTEE FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS. EVIDENTLY ONE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE THE THANKLESS TASK OF SEEKING WAYS TO UPGRADE THE CONDITIONS OF FARM LABOR AS CALLED FOR IN RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE DIRECTIVES AIMED AT EVENTUAL ELIMINATION OF THE DISPARITY BETWEEN INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL WORK. IN THIS CONNECTION WE NOTE THAT IN CONFORMITY WITH THE COMMITTEE'S NEW STATUS AS A UNION REPUBLIC STATE ORGANIZATION, A CORRESPONDING ORGAN WAS RECENTLY FORMED ON THE RSFSR LEVEL, WHERE THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR UTILIZATION OF LABOR RESOURCES WAS REORGANIZED INTO A UNION REPUBLIC RSFSR STATE COMMITTEE FOR LABOR (PRAVDA, SEPT 9).

6. UNTIL NOW, THE CHIEF WAY PEASANTS COULD EXPRESS THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE SOVIET REGIME'S MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURE WAS TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE LAND INTO BETTER PAYING JOBS IN THE CITIES WHERE LIKE WAS EASIER AND MORE PLEASANT. IN SHORT, THEY HAVE BEEN "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET". ONE IS ENTITLED TO WONDER WHETHER THE NEWLY REORGANIZED STATE COMMITTEE HAS THE MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL TO MAKE ANY HEADWAY IN REVERSING AN ELEMENTAL TREND.

7. AT THE SAME TIME, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT STATE COMMITTEE IS ONLY ONE INSTRUMENT FOR DEALING WITH WHAT SOVIETS RECOGNIZE TO BE A NATURAL AND EVEN INEVITABLE DEVELOPMENT. ASKED SEPT 14 ABOUT SIGNIFICANCE OF RECENT SPATE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS ON AGRICULTURE, AND ABOUT DANGER THAT BY THE TIME SOVIETS SOLVE THEIR AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM THERE WILL BE NO ONE LEFT ON THE LAND, MINAG MEAT PRODUCTION DEPUTY CHIEF SAID RURAL EXODUS WILL GO ON, THAT KEY TO SOLUTION IS MECHANIZATION AND INDUSTRIAL-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IZATION PERMITTING MORE PRODUCTION WITH FEWER PEOPLE, AND THAT PURPOSE OF RECENT RESOLUTIONS WAS TO FORCE INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE NECESSARY INPUTS TO AGRICULTURE. PROBLEM IS LONG-TERM-"WE ALL HAVE IT"--BUT, HE INSISTED, IT IS BEING SOLVED, AND WILL BE SOLVED. MATLOCK

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